

THE CRITICS' CORNER.

WEEKLY CHAT REGARDING WRITERS AND BOOKS.

Mr. McCarthy's Singular Argument.—Mrs. Robins' Recent Contribution to the Ladies Home Journal.

"Quare Fremuerant Centres?"

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" was the cry of the Psalmist in utter despair of understanding the moods and methods of his day. We of the present have to deal with facts, although the mind of Mr. McCarthy, whose illogical article under the heading "Spurious Aristocracy," appeared in the columns of last Sunday's "Times," appears to have much difficulty in distinguishing them. The argument, as stated by him seems, through a lurid haze to be somewhat like this—that Patrick Henry, first orator and governor of Virginia, was "an ordinary and awkward man" (as cotemporary history agrees), and that, therefore, he could not have been descended from well placed and educated ancestry!

Now there is no accepted connection between awkwardness and ancestry.

That Stonewall Jackson, foremost captain of his day (and also "awkward") was "poor, shiftless, ignorant, stubborn, slothful, and for some time a vagabond," and that, therefore, his people could not have been among the most prominent of their part of the State.

This question does not concern the appearance or occupation or even character of either man; his credit or discredit, and it is rather late to call for a certificate of early good conduct in the youth of Patrick Henry or Stonewall Jackson.

The statement made was simply that each was descended from the influential families of their section. This is either true or false. If a mistake, let the proofs be forthcoming on the one side, as they can be on the other. "A positive assertion is no argument." The Henrys have records; a memorandum of the Jackson family can easily be furnished.

Although it may appear to some, superfluous and in quite bad taste for a great man to be well born, how is it possible for him to regulate this matter? Should not our resentment be tempered with pity for human helplessness which cannot always secure the double advantage of ancestral, as well as personal obscurity?

As set forth by Mr. Carlton McCarthy, it must be inconvenient to inherit the "noblesse oblige." Perhaps also the mind acts more vigorously when untrammelled by the traditions of courtesy, self-restraint and toleration which are said to follow broad culture and generations of gentle breeding!

PRESIDENT TYLER'S DAUGHTER.

Mrs. Robins' Attractive Sketch of Mrs. Semple.

Mrs. Sallie Nelson Robins whose charming contributions to Virginia history have just been gracefully acknowledged by her appointment as Assistant Librarian of the Virginia Historical Society, has contributed to the March number of the "Ladies Home Journal" a pleasing sketch of "President Tyler's Daughter," Mrs. Letitia Tyler Semple.

The two portraits—one dated 1843, when she presided at the White House, the other as she now appears at the Louise Home—will awaken memories in many widely separated sections. The old Colonial capital of Williamsburg was the home of her girlhood, and here the famous college, given by William and Mary to the New Dominion, had drawn all the glided youth of the day. As the daughter of a leading politician and former governor of the State, Miss Tyler was thrown into the gayest circles of a society accounted the best in Virginia.

How many old time students will recall Letitia Tyler in her first bloom! Gay, spirited, and slender, she bore the most distinguished type of blonde beauty in haughty, aquiline features softened by a wonderful complexion, exquisite as tinted ivory. "Do you remember," say the boys of fifty years ago, "the night Mrs. Semple played the fortune-teller at our church fair? How the students crowded around her. In that fantastic dress she looked a Norse Sybil, as she turned her wheel!" For the wife of eighteen does not resign her social sovereignty, especially in a college town.

There were the other fair daughters of the future President—lovely Elizabeth, and Alice, then a child. There, too, were her brothers, Robert and John—the former with his charming and accomplished wife, nee Miss Cooper (daughter of the English tragedian, Thomas Cooper) who was one of the social favorites of Williamsburg, and adored by her husband and his family, the latter, in after years known as Major John Tyler, still at college, but married to that fairy-like belle and beauty, Miss Rochelle.

The scene soon shifted to the White House, where the family life was kept up in a fashion quite hopeless in these far busier and more crowded days. Few, perhaps, of those who enjoyed the afternoon concerts on the Mansion grounds, now remember that they were first introduced by the Tyler family. Here Elizabeth was married to Mr. William Waller (a direct descendant of the earls of Traquair), looking, as her sister-in-law wrote, "surprisingly lovely in her wedding dress and long blond-lace veil."

I heard one of her bridesmaids express to Mr. Webster her surprise at Lizzy's consenting to give up her belle ship, with all the delights of Washington, and retire to a quiet Virginia home.

"Ah," said he:

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,

And love is heaven, and heaven is love."

Here the gentle, lovely mother passed

suddenly away, and Mrs. Semple was called to preside over the presidential hospitalities. It is a little curious to learn of the difference in official life fifty years ago. Dinner parties were given twice a week—one of twenty covers, to gentlemen visiting the city—the other, for both ladies and gentlemen to the number of forty, chosen from the various State and diplomatic dignitaries. Every evening the drawing-room was open informally until 10 o'clock. Occasionally, during the season, there was a private ball, terminating at 11 o'clock; a public levee once a month, and a general reception at New Year and July Fourth. Even the public receptions were not considered sufficiently public to condone the bad taste of newspaper mention, or description of any attending guests.

Shades of the departed! Could you only return to witness the vulgar rush for just such notice, how could we of the present day creditably explain the decadence of old-time elegance! Mrs. Semple, from her dignified seclusion at the Louise Home, may well look with wonder and quiet scorn upon the plebeian scramble which has replaced the proud, patrician repose of yore.

THE VIRGINIA MEDICAL MONTHLY.

March. Landon B. Edwards, M. D., Richmond, Va., Editor and Proprietor. \$3 per annum. For sale by West Johnston & Co.

The March issue of the Medical Monthly, which, while distinctively a southern journal, and especially designed as a medium for the medical profession in that section, has, under the able editorship of Dr. Edwards, commended itself to the profession in all sections, fully sustains the admirable reputation long since attained by it. The original communications, of which there are six, are all upon interesting topics, and strongly written. Each throws a side light of special experience upon some knotty problem, new or old, in the treatment of disease and the alleviation of suffering. The contributors to this department being Dr. A. M. Jacob, of New York; Dr. George Hyrd Harrison, of Washington; Dr. David Webster, of New York; Dr. J. Wesley Bovee, of Washington; Dr. Charles H. May, of New York; Dr. W. Hampton Caldwell, and Dr. C. B. Hargrove, of Norfolk.

Four pages are devoted to chemical reports, fourteen to a record of the proceedings of societies, etc., two to analyses, etc., two to book notices, and three to editorials.

An index to volume XVII of the Medical Monthly, which includes the separate issues from April, '90 to March, '91, inclusive, is appended, and quite a large number of pages are devoted to advertisements.

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES.

Personalities and Items of General Interest.

Mark Twain has absolutely no regard for neatness in his apparel. His clothes look as if they had been pitchforked onto him at long range.

Munkacsy has nearly finished the historic picture of Arpad, the national hero of Hungary. This painting is to be placed in the Hungarian House of Parliament.

In Volume III. of the Johns Hopkins Hospital reports there appears for the first time the name of a woman physician among the list of writers on special subjects.

Bret Harte resides with the Belgian Minister in London. He devotes all his time to literature. He is over fifty, is in poor health, dresses in perfect taste, and is very handsome. He earns about \$15,000 a year.

The impression that Mr. F. Marion Crawford is the most popular American novelist is confirmed by the report that he receives the sum of \$10,000 on the publication of each new novel which he writes.

Among the book sales of this month in London is one which includes a small collection of books which formed a part of the library of Napoleon, at St. Helena. The whole collection is in a box, which is surmounted by a crowned N. Most of the volumes are historical works, and contain notes in Napoleon's handwriting.

In England a society was recently formed for the philanthropic purpose of supplying poorhouse inmates with literature. The guardians of such an institution in Kent recently applied for some books and got a package made up of "A Chronology of the Soap Trade," "The Manufacture of Bleaching Powder," "A Guide to London, 1877," "The Condensation of Noxious Vapors," five German almanacs and a French Bible.

Francis Thompson, who is hailed in London as a great poet, was selling matches in the streets not long ago. This was only a temporary experience with poverty, however, for he is a college-bred man, well up in the classics and in medicine. His first book of verse, published last December, has already gone through three editions. At present, he is living a retired life at a Capuchin monastery in Wales.

The personal history of Shakespeare is involved in such a mist that one reads with great regret the announcement that Charleotte, for so many centuries in the hands of the Lucy family, is to be offered for sale, and that one link of reality between the great dramatist and the country in which he was born is about to be broken. If Walter Savage Landor were living, he would be tempted to interpret the passing of the estate out of the hands of the Lucys as a judgment on the family.

FOOD FOR REFLECTION.

GATHERED FROM THE RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL PRESS.

Words of Wisdom on Religious and Moral Subjects Which are Worthy of Attention from the Thoughtful.

Mary Magdalene.

"And she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith—'Sir, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' . . . And He saith unto her 'Mary!' and she saith unto Him 'Rabboni!' which being interpreted, is Master."

Pale by the tomb, with anguish weary eyes.

And eager lips quiver with surprise,

Mary the loving stands

With tight clasped, trembling hands;

The while her shadowy hair in sombre grace

Frameth the wistful beauty of her face,

Or meets the wind's embrace.

"Why weepest, woman, and whom seekest, pray?"

A white clad figure unto her doth say—

Dim in the dawn's advance—

The gardener, perchance—

With broken heart of love she swift replies,

The while love's teardrops shine within her eyes—

"My Lord is gone!"

"Mary!"—a face down drooped on her distress

In radiant and triumphant tenderness—

And clear familiar chord—

Her love's reward!

Then breaks the light, the shadows flee apart,

Fruitful's glory shineth in her heart—

"Master! Rabboni! Lord."

ALICE LODGE HOUSTON.

"HE THAT LOSETH HIS LIFE."

The Nature of That Loss—Development.

What is meant, then by losing one's life? and what by saving it? Let us begin with the little child. It must lose its life. What is the life of the child? It at first is simply animal life; just as the life of the plant is at first simply the life of the stem. This kind of life of the child, we may say, has, at first, full power; it is, in fact, complete master; it is, in a sense, all there is of the child; take this away and there would be no child left. It must lose this life in order to pass into, or have developed a higher stage of life. Now this does not mean that this child-life must be destroyed. This would destroy the child. Nothing must be destroyed. Life is pleasure. Animal life is animal pleasure. This is all the pleasure of which the child is at first capable; and the child is rightfully entitled to all the pleasures of which its life is capable. We as parents have no right to destroy, or unduly restrain or limit the kind of pleasure that properly belongs to this stage of human life. Just so far as we do this, we interfere with the great law of the child's development into manhood and Godlike angelhood. It is our duty to see that the child has fullness of life on its plane, or in its stage of development. It is for us to restrain only such excessive indulgence as we know the unreasoning child is inclined to. For excess interferes with present, healthy condition, and thus with present fullness of life and pleasure, even if no other consequences were to follow. Now when the child is fully obeying the laws of its life, not of some other life, it is in its proper, normal, healthy condition; it is fulfilling all the required conditions of perfect childhood. Its life is perfect childhood life. But when it comes to a certain stage of ripeness of this, its first stage of life, it is furnishing the good ground in which is germinating the next higher stage of life.

FITNESS FOR HEAVEN.

The Education of the Soul and the Body.

Now, the gaining of Heaven is a process of education. Is it not Cardinal Newman who, in one of his sermons or essays, supposes the impossible case of a sinner, unrepentant transferred into the celestial courts? He is out of his environment, miserable, altogether discontented, and not to be reconciled to his lot. The chemistry of penitence had not changed the processes of his soul; so the reformatory effects of grace and the transfiguration consequent upon these are impossible. The better the life led here, the better developed are the will and intellect for the appreciation of the life beyond, just as he who trains his ears to melody is carried away by the sonata whose beauties are, for the most part, lost upon an uncultured neighbor.

What is true of the soul applies in proper measure to the body. Let it be dealt with in life in the light of its high destiny, it must needs become the more perfect instrument of heavenly sensation. God's mysterious action converting corruption into the incorruptible, the mortal into the immortal, is of course, the prime cause in making our corporal senses at all capable of Heaven; but it is the law of his action that the more he has to begin with, the more there is as a result. The greater the effort on our part to prepare these poor machines for glory, the greater will be the glory attained by them.

These considerations throw a sacredness about our bodies which should make us deal with them as offerings to the Lord. Certainly anything which brutalizes or debauches them, or tends to do so, is to be warred against. Moreover, men who have not Cain's words upon

their lips—"Am I my brother's keeper?"—will not only war against such things, but their own interests may be advanced, but even where these are not at stake they will do battle for the sake of others. Two evils of tremendous power are at work among the mass of men, brutalizing bodies, destroying their fitness for heaven.—Exchange.

The Vital Question.

Every now and then a conscience, among the men and women who live easy, thoughtless lives, is stirred, and some one looks up anxiously, holding up some one of the pretty idlenesses in which such people spend their days and nights, and says, "Is this wrong? Is it wicked to do this?" And then they get their answer, "No, certainly not wicked," then they go back and give their whole lives up to doing their innocent little piece of uselessness again. Ah! the question is not whether that is wicked, whether God will punish you for doing that. The question is whether that thing is keeping other better things away from you; whether behind its little bulk the vast privilege and dignity of duty is hid from you; whether it stands between God and your soul. If it does then it is an offence to you, and though it be your right hand or your right eye, cut it off, and pluck it out and cast it from you. The advantage and joy will not be in its absence, for you will miss it very sorely, but in what its loss reveals, in the new life which lies beyond it, which you will see stretching out and tempting you as soon as it is gone.—Phillips Brooks.

Our Weakness.

When we consider how weak we are in ourselves, yea, the very strongest of us, and how assaulted, we may justly wonder that we can continue one day in the state of grace; but when we look on the strength by which we are guarded, the power of God, then we see the reason of our stability to the end; for omnipotency supports us, and the everlasting arms are under us.—Archbishop Leighton.

RELIGIOUS NOTES.

Regarding the General News in the Churches.

The number of Protestant dissenters from the Orthodox Russian church who are either compulsorily settled in the provinces of Transcaucasia or are voluntarily emigrating thither, seem to be largely on the increase. In some provinces they already outnumber the Orthodox Russians. In the district of Kara, coded to Russia after the war of 1877, they form 95 per cent. of the entire Russian population. In the province of Elizabethpol, the region to which most of the banished Stundists and Baptists are sent, the Protestant dissenters already number nearly ten thousand. It is an interesting feature of this persecution that in a large number of cases the Stundists and Baptists are banished to places where there are magnificent opportunities afforded them for engaging in missionary work either among the Armenians of the Gregorian church, or among the Tartars and Persians in their neighborhood. The Russian brethren, many of them, show considerable ability in picking up the language of the natives; and their first concern is often to let their benighted neighbors hear the glad news of the Gospel of Christ. Some most deeply interesting missionary experiences of this character have come to our ears.

As an evidence of the rapid growth of the Church of England in Wales, at the very time that the Liberal Government contemplate its disestablishment, the Rock, London, states that eight new permanent churches, ten mission churches, and three new vicarages have been erected since 1884, in the town of Swansea. Besides this, the parish church has been rebuilt; also four new parishes have been created, and twelve additional clergy are being employed. The Swansea Church Extension Fund has raised a sum equal to \$120,000 toward these works.

Luther's famous old church at Wittenberg, Germany, which the Emperor had restored and reconsecrated in 1892, has been wrecked again by the hurricane which swept over Europe a few days since.

The Established Church of Scotland has 1,348 parishes with 694,884 communicants, and 2,139 Sunday-schools with 29,603 scholars.

During Lent, says the Catholic News, the churches in Paris present each Sunday a scene of religious activity and reverent devotion analogous to what is going on now in London during the course of the great mission. On Quinquagesima Sunday, Cardinal Richard publishes a list of select preachers whose talents and zeal befitted them to occupy the pulpits of the sacred edifices subject to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Paris. As a rule, the best preachers are allotted to the principal churches, although this year the distinguished Father Oliver, Dominican Prior, of Amiens, is placed at the Church of St. Honore d'Eylau, near the suburb of Passy. At the venerable cathedral of Notre Dame, Mgr. d'Hulst once more occupies the pulpit, continuing the series of conferences on the Commandments of God which he began last year.

Up to March 1st, the receipts of the Missionary Union were \$349,882, including \$24,000 from invested funds and \$145,411 from the women's societies. In order to close the year without debt, \$266,701 must be received during the present month. The Home Mission Society is in almost as bad a case. It needs this month, in order to avoid a debt, \$190,000. Last year the receipts for March were \$64,000. Therefore, unless a special effort is made this year, there will be a deficit of something like \$125,000.—New York Examiner (Baptist).